

A FEAST FOR RATS: OLD JAPANESE PRINT

Their leader—almost a shepherd!—
Cascades the precious manuscripts, the scrolls,
The pile of books that fan out, stairways
In a bombing,

And presses his bubonic mouth
To history or literature, taking from them
A jagged kiss to soothe his gums
And carry off like a princess.

The ruck of scions fawning in his disregard
Nip out a character or place crinkled feet
On the fine hand someone wrote in
But an hour before

In the revery of twilight—wrote destined
For total darkness. They do not know
What to take and what to leave—
So just a taste!

The temple bell rings a swath down the wall.
The thunder . . . it is late. The gross one turns
Lustrous eyes sewerward: off!
To his sepulchral abbey, with scraps.